

Volcanoes in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a Central American country that attracts tens of thousands of U.S. tourists every year since it can easily be reached by plane



from major U.S. cities. Costa Rica is a safe country for tourists to visit because Costa Rica maintains a good relationship with U.S. government and industry. Located just 90 miles northwest of San Jose, the capital city, the Arenal Volcano is a one of many active volcanoes in the mountains of Costa Rica.

This mountain volcano is about 5,500 feet tall and has been an active volcano for thousands of years. Scientists estimate that the Arenal Volcano began erupting some 7,000 years ago and it remains the most active volcano in Costa Rica. On July 29, 1968 a major eruption blew off the entire west side of the mountain peak. Over the next several days three new craters formed in this west peak area of the volcano while the ensuing lava flows destroyed two villages at the base of the mountain.

Since this eruption, the volcano has been continuously active with minor lava flows emanating from vents created by the 1968 eruption. Lava is magma, the molten or partially molten rock that forms beneath the Earth's surface, which reaches the surface. Scientists have also discovered ancient human footprints in the lava in Costa Rica that date back to 10,000 B.C.

The Arenal National Park was created in 1991 and contains some 30,000 acres. Tourists can stay at a number of hotels and lodges around the national park that have excellent views of the volcano. There are a variety of ways to experience the volcano including bus tours, hiking and bicycle trips.